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ELAB, GH
SUBJECT: Corrected Copy: 2009 TIP Interim Assessment-Ghana

SECSTATE 112432

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) In 2009, Ghana has increased its investigation and prosecution of individuals involved in human trafficking, convicting at least five people and sentencing them to terms in prison. At least nine investigations remain in progress, and 18 trafficking victims were rescued. Ghana collaborated with neighboring countries, including Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria, as well as international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF. The Government maintains two shelters, and cooperates with an NGO that runs a third. However, the lack of adequate facilities to protect victims remains a weakness.

2. (SBU) The government has a Human Trafficking Secretariat within the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC). This Secretariat is responsible for coordinating human trafficking issues in Ghana. It oversees policy formulation, police review, implementation, advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation of trafficking cases. The secretariat also ensures proper data collection and conducts research into trafficking issues and activities in Ghana.

3. (SBU) On August 25, President John Atta Mills appointed members to the Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB) as the old board was disbanded when Mills' predecessor left office after the December election. It is an inter-sectoral board chaired by the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs and comprised of police, immigration officials, health and education ministries, and NGOs. In addition, the government has asked representatives from IOM and UNICEF to sit on the board as official observers. The Board will advise the Minister on trafficking policy, and promote strategies to prevent trafficking and the rehabilitation and re-integration of trafficking victims.

4. (SBU) In 2009, the government took steps to establish four regional Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in the Western, Central, Northern, and Ashanti Regions to manage cases more effectively at the regional and district levels, and has identified individuals to staff these units. In 2009, the AHTU created a website, www.ahtu.org, to promote trafficking awareness. In July, the Ghana Parliament passed a law to amend the definition of trafficking included in the 2005 Human Trafficking Act. The amendment added the phrase 'for the purpose of exploitation' to ensure that the Ghanaian definition of human trafficking was in accord with the definition contained in the Protocol of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime.

Ghana TIP Plan of Action:

Prosecution of Trafficking Offenders

5. (SBU) Ghana has a legal framework to protect trafficking victims,

and the Ghanaian police made several high profile arrests and had multiple convictions as a result of increased police awareness, according to Patience Quaye, head of the Ghana Police Anti-Human Trafficking Unit.

¶16. (SBU) As of November 2009, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit database contained a listing of twenty cases. Of the listed cases, seven are currently under investigation. In two of the cases under investigation, the accused is at-large, and in one case the victim was returned to her family in Togo while the investigation continues.

¶17. (SBU) In one case under investigation, four Nigerian women were trafficked from Nigeria to Ghana. Ghanaian authorities worked closely with their counterparts in Nigeria to investigate the case, arrest the Nigerian trafficker, and rescue the victims. The victims were returned to their families, and the accused trafficker is awaiting trial in Nigeria.

¶18. (SBU) During 2009, the Ghanaian government has prosecuted seven trafficking cases. In five of the cases, the defendants were held without bail and the cases are ongoing.

¶19. (SBU) The government obtained convictions in two of the cases listed in the database. In one case, the government convicted three Chinese nationals of trafficking eight Chinese women to Ghana for prostitution. The traffickers received a combined sentence of 41 years. In the second case, the trafficker received a jail sentence of eight years for trafficking three Ghanaian children from Ghana to Cote D'Ivoire.

¶110. (SBU) In three of the cases listed in the database and under investigation, Ghanaian law enforcement has so far been unable to locate and arrest the traffickers. However, two of the victims in these cases were returned to their families for reintegration and another victim was placed into a shelter.

¶111. (SBU) The government is currently working with UNICEF and IOM on a case involving a 17-year-old Ghanaian girl who had been trafficked to Senegal. The trafficker died before the victim was identified, and the girl is currently in school in Senegal. The victim is in touch with her family in Ghana, and the Ghanaian government is working with IOM to reintegrate her.

¶112. (SBU) In addition to the cases recorded in the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit database, the government successfully prosecuted a 28-year-old man in the Western Region for attempting to sell his eight-year-old brother. He was sentenced on October 12 to four years in prison. In the Ashanti region, Ghanaian authorities are currently rxt\$J~QTQHf&AQ4der daughter for trafficking a 12-year-old Togolese girl from Ghana to Nigeria.

¶113. (SBU) On October 7, police arrested a 46 year-old woman in the Ashanti Region for attempting to traffic an employee in her kiosk to Cote d'Ivoire for ritual purposes. In November, police in New Ningo arrested two sisters who attempted to sell their 15-year-old nephew for 600 Ghana cedis. The accused admitted sending their nephew to Guinea to work in the fishing industry.

¶114. (SBU) Furthermore, police in the Volta Region are collaborating with the NGO Challenging Heights to prosecute a case involving a boy who was rescued from a fishing village. Police are working with the same NGO to investigate a second case involving children trafficked to work in the fishing sector in the Volta Region.

¶115. (SBU) In September, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly Task Force demolished a brothel known locally as the Soldier Bar. This brothel was raided by the police in 2008 after reports that it was being used for child prostitution.

Shelters -----

¶116. (SBU) The government operates two shelters, one in Madina and the other in Osu, both of which need renovations and additions. In addition an NGO, the Ark Foundation, operates one shelter exclusively for women.

¶17. (SBU) Lack of shelters remains a challenge for law enforcement and other government agencies that rescue trafficking victims. According to the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, the Human Trafficking management Board plans to open shelters in all regions of Ghana, with priority given to shelters in the most heavily affected areas of the Central, Volta, Western and three Northern regions. The MOWAC minister is receptive to finding funding for additional shelters. The AHTU is also working with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to secure funding to build additional shelters.

Trafficking Victims' Fund

¶18. (SBU). While the previous administration established an account to assist human trafficking victims, the account has not been funded for several years, and had no funds when the current government took office in early 2009. The AHTU is working with MOWAC to establish a separate account for the Victims' Fund so that any money put into the Fund in the future would remain separate from ministry operating funds.

¶19. (SBU) After prosecutors convicted three Chinese nationals of trafficking eight Chinese women to Ghana for commercial sex, the government seized \$14,560 found in the brothel. The government used these funds to pay for airline tickets to return the women to China and, to provide them with pocket money for their return.

Training to identify trafficking victims and respect victims' rights.

¶20. (SBU) A wide range of organizations have provided training for Ghana police, investigators, prosecutors, AHTU staff, and judicial officials. In 2009, personnel participated in more than forty training sessions sponsored by INTERPOL, IOM, ILO, UNICEF, the U.S. Embassy, the German Embassy, the British High Commission, the University of Ghana, MOWAC and The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. In September, the Ghanaian Police and INTERPOL hosted a regional workshop on human trafficking for law enforcement officials from English speaking West African countries.

¶21. (SBU) The training sessions included seminars on disseminating good practices in combating child trafficking, training for anti-human trafficking unit staff members, child and youth migration training, trafficking awareness/sensitization, and counter-trafficking. Police state that training to identify trafficking has resulted in more arrests. In addition, the training has led to an increase in attention law enforcement officials are paying to human trafficking issues, as well as their capacity to mount undercover operations in the regions.

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